DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 197 UD 026 917

TITLE Towards Cultural Democracy: The Development and Implementation of a Multi-Cultural Arts Policy for New York State. Document #88-5.

INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Albany. New York African American Inst.

PUB DATE Jan 89

NOTE 93p.

AVAILABLE FROM New York African American Institute, State University of New York, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246.

PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS African Culture; American Indian Culture; *Artists; *Cultural Pluralism; Economic Research; *Financial Support; Hispanic American Culture; *Minority Groups; Racial Discrimination; State Agencies; State Programs; *Theater Arts

IDENTIFIERS *New York; *New York State Council on the Arts

ABSTRACT

Although funding for the arts in New York State reached unprecedented levels during the 1980s, funding for organizations which have distinct ethnic bases and purposes has not kept pace with funding for Eurocentric arts expressions. Data were gathered from a public hearing in New York City attended by more than 100 artists, administrators, cultural workers, and concerned community persons of color, and from an analysis of a 5-year funding history of 57 ethnic cultural institutions receiving support from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). Many NYSCA funding biases appear to be caused by a tendency to make subjective judgments of art, concepts, and organizations based on European modeled objectives. Programs represented by communities or persons of color are either not funded or are grossly underfunded. The following recommendations are suggested: (1) create a stabilization fund for minority arts programs; (2) establish a panel to manage the stabilization fund; (3) revise funding guidelines to include a culturally diverse perspective; and (4) allocate 50 percent of all state funding to people of color. The appendices comprise the following: (1) statements by Native American, Asian American, Latino, and African American task force members; (2) a statistical supplement discussing methodology and significant statistical findings; (3) a list of members of the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus; (4) a list of nine references; and (5) two editorials from New York City newspapers discussing discrimination in funding arts programs. (FMW)

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TOWARDS CULTURAL DEMOCRACY:
the Development and Implementation of a Multi - Cultural Arts Policy for New York State

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TOWARDS CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

The Development and Implementation of a Policy for Cultural Diversity in New York State: A Report by The Cultural Arts Task Force of the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus and the New York State African American Institute at SUNY.

January 1989

FOREWORD

The United States does not belong to people of European descent only. It is a pluralistic society with a significant array of ethnic institutions.

Accordingly, the State of New York will be able to serve the interests of all its citizens equitably when it places importance on ethnic and cultural diversity. This means that the contributions of African, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic and Native Americans should be recognized, acknowledged and valued.

The November, 1987 public hearings, conducted by the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus in New York City, highlighted the concerns of many artists that the current funding patterns of public state agencies were discriminatory against those activities that were non-Eurocentric in nature.

The Cultural Arts Task Force of the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus is to be commended for identifying some of the inequities in the system and for making recommendations to assure the survival of the state's symphony of cultures promoted through the arts.

The New York African American Institute hopes that the report, Towards Cultural Democracy..., will assist in future policy deliberations.

Dr. Florence J. Staats
Acting Director

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Towards Cultural Democracy: The Development and Implementation of a Policy for Cultural Diversity in New York State was prepared for the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus by the Cultural Arts Task Force. Additional support was received from the New York African American Institute. This report is the culmination of 10 months of work by a diverse group of cultural workers and administrators. Co-chairs, Marta Moreno Vega, Cecil Alonzo and the Task Force members are to be commended for the time and energy they placed into preparing this report.

The creation of the Cultural Arts Task force is the result of hearings held in February of 1987, which brought to the attention of the Caucus the problems faced by Arts organizations of color throughout New York State. Thus, the Task Force was charged with identifying the problems of inadequate funding, cultural insensitivity, and faulty programming by state funding agencies which are well documented in this report.

A process of addressing the inequities faced by people of color in the preservation, documentation and promulgation of their contribution to world history will be developed through the recommendations set forth in this report. These recommendations are aimed at assuring the survival of the cultural heritage, diversity, and creative expression of the state's population of color.

Though critical of aspects of the New York State Council on the Arts, the Task Force has often praised the work of the Special Arts Services program as an example of the cultural diversity which should be reflected throughout the entire Council.

Caucus actions will be guided by the recommendations contained in this report. It is my sincere hope that the Task Force will continue to play an integral part in the process of implementing the recommendations.

Assemblyman Roger L. Green
Chairman

STATEMENT FROM CULTURAL ARTS TASK FORCE CO-CHAIR

The New York State Council on the Arts has excluded the participation of experts and art organizations which reflect the aesthetic value systems and expressions of people of color, since its inception as a commission in 1960, and as a permanent agency in 1965.

Under pressure, the Council created the Ghetto Arts Division in 1966, after a coalition of artists which included African, Asian and Latino Americans was formed. The Division was established with a limited allocation of funds to address the specific interests of so-called minority cultures of the state. Over time this division has evolved to become the Special Arts Service Division (SAS).

This division has been plagued by the realities that affect the majority of programs designed to address communities of color. SAS has been continuously underfunded. Its existence is often threatened, thus, creating the need for arts groups to mobilize and lobby for its continuation. In addition, its mandate is constantly broadened, spreading out funds and decreasing their allocation to any particular group. This situation does not exist for "primary organizations", which are assured funding, through legislation for the State Council on the Arts.

The desire of institutions which reflect the aesthetic perceptions and creative expressions of people of color is to receive adequate funding to carry out their cultural arts mandates. However, because of the systematic exclusion of the value systems and aesthetic criteria which reflect people of color, our organizations face impossible odds in receiving deserved support required to maintain these operations.

The structure of the New York State Council on the Arts includes limited representation of people of color in the New York State Council's policy-making body. Presently, out of twenty members, Richard Clarke and Lowery Sims have the understanding and expertise of, and emerge from a population which is becoming the major population of New York State. There is no representation on the Council of Asian Americans, Native Americans or Latino American communities.

The Council, in its guidelines for selection of Council members and panelists, focuses on individuals who have a Eurocentric aesthetic viewpoint and value system. Consequently, the funds awarded are primarily supportive of institutions which have molded their arts and cultural expressions to fit Eurocentric modes. It is clear that Native-, Asian-, Latino- and African American cultural expressions are not based on a Eurocentric aesthetic, as preferred, and therefore, are continuously subjected to underfunding limited growth possibilities and constant justification of existence. The struggles faced by our organizations are monumental.

The Task Force finds that it is necessary for the establishment of a state government division focusing on the cultures of people of color in New York State which would:

1. Focus on equitable representation of experts of these cultures in all state agencies;

2. Have direct input into the development of guidelines for and selection of people of color in policy-making positions;

3. Develop a promotional campaign highlighting the contributions of people of color and their organizations;

4. Research, document and proposed programs which would rectify the system's exclusion of and limited funding to representatives and institutions of color which

reflect the aesthetic value systems and aesthetic criteria of their cultures.

5. Arrange meetings between the Governor of the State of New York and the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus to maintain the progress of reparation to communities of color, assuring the celebration of the contributions of Native-, Asian-, Latino- and African American to New York State, reversing the systematic exclusion and its devastating effects on these communities.

6. Declare cultural diversity, parity, equity and equal access for all as the guiding principle for all policy decisions and implementation of policy.

7. Establish a Process for the equitable redistribution of existing funds.

The Cultural Arts Task Force is most appreciative to the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus for its commitment to cultural parity for our communities. We are also appreciative for support of the New York African American Institute in providing the resources for continued support of our research.

Marta Moreno Vega
Co-chair

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INTRODUCTION

Social progress and democracy in America are perhaps the major national attributes used to describe the quality of life in this society. Along with making boastful statements about human rights, this nation sees itself as the model to which other nations are to aspire. Our standard of living, our hard earned and highly praised freedoms of speech and media are constantly projected as the keystones for democracy. If anything, however, the 1980's are proving to be a period of social retreat from the "great society" for people of color in America.

The establishment and growth of the United States in relation to people of color -- Native Americans, Asians, Latino Americans, and African descendants -- was and continues to be both a devastating and sophisticated process of exploitation. European ethnocentrism, racism, slavery, ethnic prejudice, discrimination and exclusion are a powerful system of attitudes and actions which influence the creation of this nation's heritage.

Myths have been fostered about European cultural and spiritual superiority -- in some cases to the near extermination of the cultural and spiritual values of those people of color and their descendants who have contributed creative energy, blood, lives and labor to build America.

As 1992, the quincentennial anniversary of the arrival of European explorers and imperialists in America approaches, people of color in this nation face another phase in the struggle for equality. Eurocentrism and racism pollute today's social fabric and are particularly destructive when aimed at non-western culture and art. American history too often neglects the facts that the vast riches of the New World were dug and cut out, constructed and harvested by countless people of color.

Europe's exploitation of the world's people of color has been rationalized on grounds such as "bringing civilization to heathens" and this historical process sits at the core of this nation's psyche. However disguised, this process is designed to continue today and tomorrow.

Although America is often described as a "melting pot", the contents of the pot are too often a European blend, rather than a tasty mix of colorful items from the vast cultural cupboard of all people of the Americas.

There is a tremendous, almost earthshaking power in culture and art. The following report, compiled by the Cultural Arts Task Force of the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, with the support of the New York African American Institute and other cultural workers throughout the state, clearly identifies a long-term Eurocentric attitude towards arts/culture in New York State. The report makes strong suggestions and

recommendations for eliminating Eurocentric cultural hegemony and the dangers faced by artists and institutions of color in the state because of these Eurocentric attitudes.

The findings have been edited from testimony in public hearings and Task Force meetings, and show the passion which people of color struggle to maintain their institutions, their creative expressions, and their sense of community in the face of institutional discrimination in the area of funding by state agencies.

As artists of color in this nation continue to make it (through their unique perspectives) a more humane society, efforts of all the cultural workers contributing to this report may well serve as a model for creating true artistic and social parity and moving America forward towards cultural democracy.

Kenneth Dossar
Editor

REPORT SUMMARY:
THE MISSION OF THE CULTURAL ARTS TASK FORCE

In the Spring of 1987, the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus established the Cultural Arts Task Force in response to the surging numbers of requests by cultural workers and artists of diverse ethnic backgrounds. A Consensus of these groups was that the existing funding patterns of public state agencies were discriminatory and this adversely affects the development of cultural organizations in the communities of people of color. Specifically, these funding patterns are Eurocentric in perspective and limit funds to organizations of color. The nature of Eurocentric funding policies and the detrimental effect on the institutions and arts of people of color is the catalyst motivating the Task Force to document these inequities and try to devise the creation of a multicultural funding policy that would benefit all the people of this state.

CAUCUS PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

On November 12, 1987, public hearings were held by the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. At this time, more than 100 artists, administrators, cultural workers and concerned community persons of color voiced their deep frustrations with policies and funding patterns of NYSCA. Paramount in a majority of the presentations was a need to insure the survival of ethnic diversity and the need

to insure that art forms, institutions, images and heritages of people of color be maintained by equitable funding to this population.

THE PRESSING AND IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF OUR ARTISTS AND INSTITUTIONS

With proof of the collapse and demise of more than 85% of Black theatre groups during a period of 10 years; the loss of jobs; training opportunities and facility sites; the Task Force was determined to counter the present crisis and tenuous financial situation of cultural arts institutions of people of color. It was determined that the ongoing demise of numerous cultural institutions of people of color each year can only be arrested and reversed by major funding support that will stabilize and secure their future.

MAKING FAIR CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING

A review of the many problems, roadblocks and obstacles that hamper institutions of people of color applying for funds shows the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) bias toward Eurocentric institutions and the creation of an atmosphere of competition between the "have" and "have-nots". Many of these biases are caused by NYSCA's tendency to make subjective judgments of art, concepts and organizations based on European modeled objectives. Community and ethnic innovations from communities of

people of color are either not being funded or are grossly underfunded. Funding criteria were written for specifically European modeled institutions. People of color, in significant numbers, were and still are not involved in the formation of the guidelines.

INTERPRETATION AND INADEQUATE FUNDING OF PROGRAMS

The Task Force, in examining the area of programs, noted that there would be a vacuum of programs by people of color if these institutions did not exist. These programs benefit the state population in general in that they assure that Eurocentricism does not dominate cultural arts in the state. No people can afford the luxury of not producing their own images, neither can they afford to be passive observers of media messages. Examples of programs that would have never occurred in absence of institutions of color include: the art exhibition "Puerto Rican Painters 1900-1960"; the remounting of Katherine Dunham Dance Masterpieces; photographic exhibition of the history of Chinatown; and the Marcus Garvey educational exhibition. Multicultural institutions serve to complement, correct and counteract an education system that generally omits the cultural contributions and heritages of non-European peoples.

STATISTICAL DATA ON FUNDING PATTERNS

A five year funding history, 1982-1987, of 57 ethnic cultural institutions was made by the Task Force, to sample actual patterns of NYSCA funding in this area as compared with overall funding. The data shows that, in general, funding to the arts in the State of New York has reached unprecedented levels during the 1980s. However, funding for organizations which have distinct ethnic bases and purposes has not kept pace with funding for Western European derived arts expressions.

A systematic reversal of this trend should be addressed at all levels of the funding process -- new applications developed, new organizations nurtured, and traditional ones stabilized to permit secure growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stabilization Fund immediately established by NYSCA or a line item in the Governor's Budget.
- Cultural Arts Task Force to establish a panel to manage Stabilization Fund.
- Revision of guidelines to include a culturally diverse perspective.
- Legislation passed allocating to people of color 50% of all funding.

BACKGROUND AND MISSION

People of color have an economic and political interest in the development of cultural structures which provide an understanding of themselves and share this understanding with others. The right of a people to equality based on the recognition and respect of all cultures as equal is a basic premise of this report. Culture is not the domain of any one group. It is the concern and property of all groups.

Our history tells us that Native Americans were victims of a war of extermination and their cultural creations repressed or absconded into Euro-American museums and universities.

African Americans first came to New York as slaves and later as hopeful migrants looking for a better life. Despite the many and monumental contributions of these Americans of African descent to American culture, they continue to be marginalized and under-represented in New York City and state institutions.

Latin and Caribbean Americans have immigrated to the states due to the continued geo-political instability of Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite major cultural contributions and a major demographic presence since World War II, Latin Caribbean Americans have not gained substantial access into policy making positions in established cultural institutions.

And finally, from 1882 to 1968, Asians were effectively excluded from immigration into the United States. Those few Asians

who were here during this time period, primarily laundry and restaurant workers based in Chinatown, were systematically excluded from the life and politics of the city and state.

Due to continuing racial inequities and unequal access to levers of money and power, the communities and cultural organizations which nurture non-European art expression are left with insufficient resources to give the type of support needed to stabilize these indigenous cultural institutions. At best, those few artists who are willing, and invited to create and perform for Euro-American based institutions, are pulled away from their original community bases and become increasingly isolated from their cultural well-springs.

Outside of the glare of the mass culture, formally and informally organized community-based cultural organizations continue to be the primary locus of developing cultural aesthetics. These pockets are the creative sources from which alternative, non-Eurocentric expressions will continue to emerge, be nurtured and flourish. The delicate, ecological relationships between non-European American cultural workers and their communities must be acknowledged, appreciated and supported.

Currently, cultural organizations of color have been consistently underfunded, never receiving the quantity of public or private support which they need to sustain long term planning and stability. Our organizations have been developing excellent

programs and nurturing world class artists. Despite this, however, funding levels have retarded healthy organizational development, keeping many of them on the brink of collapse. Why is there such a pervasive pattern of these organizations barely surviving? The myth of "management problems" masks deeper systemic inequities.

There has not been serious recognition of the need to help develop second and third-tier organizations to nurture maturing levels of cultural productions. Nor do we all aspire to emulate existing "primary" Euro-American cultural institutions. There needs to be a range of cultural organizational models.

We recognize two hundred years of cultural policy cannot be changed overnight. However, deliberate and affirmative steps can be taken to begin the reversal of such entrenched racial inequities. Now that New York City had been officially acknowledged as majority "minority" fundamental changes have to be made.

Thus, the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus established a Cultural Arts Task Force made up of cultural administrators, artists and scholars representing Native American, Asian American, Latino and African Americans. All are recognized in their communities as experts in their fields. These members were selected for their experience and contributions to the maintenance and promulgation of their traditional, popular and contemporary cultural expressions.

The Cultural Arts Task Force was guided in its deliberations by the experience and findings of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, July - August 1982, in which Third World countries gathered to develop an international cultural policy which would safeguard, protect and nurture the heritages and creative expressions of people of color throughout the world. The conference sought to encourage the development of cultural infrastructures to assure the right of all people to their continuity and survival based on their traditional cultures.

The Cultural Arts Task Force recognized that New York State is a microcosm of the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups from all parts of the world. Further, the New York State population includes significant representation of the indigenous peoples of this land, the Native Americans. The internationalization of New York State is factual, and the concerns and issues of arrivants to this area, on a smaller scale, are addressing similar problems as those faced by the Third World representatives in the UNESCO Conference of 1982.

New York State's public arts funding agency, the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), founded in 1965 by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, served as the model for the establishment of two national funding agencies in the same year, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the

Humanities. The recommendations submitted here to the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus will serve as a base to explore the need for a representative cultural policy for New York State and as a model for replication. The concerns, issues and recommendations in this first report set forth an agenda and areas that will be expanded upon in future reports by the Cultural Arts Task Force.

The Task Force also recognizes the pioneering efforts of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus and the African American Institute for calling together, for the first time in history, a multicultural group which is representative of the varied major population groups of color in New York State. This endeavor has encouraged mutual respect for our varied cultures and a commitment towards recommending the implementation of cultural policy which respects all cultures equally; provides equal access to resources; eliminates racial and cultural bias in legislation and agencies that fund.

The mission of the Cultural Arts Task Force is to recommend structural changes in the cultural apparatus of New York State. The objectives is to eradicate the unofficial policy of assumed race, class and ethnic superiority by policy-makers who are predominantly white, and institute a policy of cultural pluralism which serves all ethnic and economic groups. Members have worked diligently over a ten month period without monetary compensation

to bring forth this report. The Task Force assisted in the organization of two public hearings held by the Caucus, enabling community participation for the gathering of information from a wide range of up-and-downstate organizations. It must be noted for the record that the Cultural Arts Task Force found it quite difficult to obtain requested information to include in this report from the public state funding agencies on a timely basis.

The information set forth has been compiled from various sources and has been analyzed and reviewed by several cultural experts and statisticians minimizing error. The Task Force is most appreciative to the commitment of the Caucus and especially to Assemblyman Roger Green in this endeavor, and the following individuals for their assistance in the completion of this report: Gordon Braithwaite, Larry Turner, Bill Moore, Jane Delgado, Alberto Perez, Charles Jones, Adeyemi Bandele, Carol White and Lloyd Hogan, former Director of the New York African American Institute in Albany.

An objective of this report is to help in creating an economic and artistic climate in which multicultural arts and institutions can be nurtured and grow. The recommendations set forth reflect the thrust of communities of color for equity, justice, access and representation which are the rights of all American citizens. In addition, the mind-set that special treatment is being sought must be dispelled. The continuing legacy of this state's racial

policies of Americans of color by a Eurocentric cultural policy is not and has never been acceptable.

This report does the following: it provides the basis for the examination of existing philosophical and structural systems which segment arts expressions into unconnected compartments; posits recommendations for a wholistic philosophy and structure which is more representative of the diverse communities in New York State; and provides standards and criteria for evaluation which is respectful and inclusive of the contributions of all cultures.

The basic definitions and premises, taken in part from the UNESCO Conference, from which the Task Force worked in order to come to its treatment of a cultural policy are:

- **CULTURE**: Culture understood "not" in the restricted sense of belles-artes, the fine arts, literature and philosophy, but as the distinctive, specific features and ways of thinking and organizing the lives of every individual and community. Culture, therefore, covers artistic creating together with the interpretation, execution and dissemination of works of art, physical culture, sports, games and open-air activities, as well as the ways in which a society and its members expressed their feeling for beauty, harmony and their vision of the world, as much as their modes of scientific, technological creation and control of their natural environment.*

  * UNESCO Conference on Culture, Mexico, July 26, 1982.

- **CULTURAL IDENTITY:** The concept of culture, cultural democracy and cultural development are essential in the arts as is culture and education, cultural communications, culture, science and technology. These are important elements and relationships for people of color to establish cultural identity.

- **CULTURAL HERITAGE:** Cultural heritage is the matrix in the deep-lying identity of a people and the source of cultural action. The cultural heritage of a people includes the work of artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It finds expression in language, rites, beliefs, historic places, monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries.

- **EXPRESSIVE DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE AND INTELLECTUAL CREATION:** All people have a right and a duty to defend and preserve their cultural heritage, since societies recognize themselves through the values in which they find a source of creative inspiration. The flowing of culture is inseparable from the freedom of expression essential for the creative activities of artists and intellectuals alike.

- **ART EDUCATION:** Because the cultural heritage of a people expresses their historical experience and provides the context within which their identity is expressed, the process of passing on this information is imperative. The role of education is ideally suited to the transmission of state, national and universal cultural values and should foster the assimilation of scientific

and technological knowledge without detriment to each people's capacities and values. At the present time, education that informs, trains and helps students to become aware of the realities of their times and environment is needed.

- **PEOPLE OF COLOR:** The people of color referred to in this report are African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans and Native Americans.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

On Friday, November 12, 1987, the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, Inc., conducted public hearings on "The Status of Cultural Arts Institutions of Color Throughout New York State." The goals of the hearings, as outlined by Assemblyman Roger L. Green, Chairman of the Caucus were:

1. To secure advice and comment from cultural workers and cultural arts organizations of people of color in the State of New York;

2. To determine the financial, organizational and programmatic status of such organizations;

3. To identify new ways, including legislative strategies, to strengthen such organizations and improve their services;

4. To assess the selection and distribution of public resources to the state's cultural organizations;

5. To assess the mission, policy and funding pattern of the New York State Council on the Arts as it relates to cultural arts organizations of people of color.

The hearings convened at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Lenox Avenue, New York City. Thirty-seven representatives of cultural arts organizations and cultural institutions from throughout the state presented testimony in behalf of the artists, arts organizations and cultural institutions that service constituencies of color reflective of the multiethnic and multicultural character of New York's performing and visual artists.

Participants from African, Latino, Asian and Native American organizations described the uniqueness of their respective communities and institutions and the problems they encounter providing quality services to their constituencies. Of special concern to virtually all participants were the New York State Council on the Arts "New Audiences Initiative" and the general pattern of NYSCA funding of cultural organizations run by people of color. Many participants called attention to the inadequacy of the state's cultural policy. Redressing these pressing concerns will require policy formulation, legislative action and funding strategies beyond the currently mandated resources and priorities of NYSCA.

A consistent theme, for instance, was the prevalence of racial and ethnic bias in the evaluation and valuation of the state's African, Latino, Asian and Native American cultural institutions. Petra Barreras, Director of El Museo del Barrio, noted that, "The western definition of culture is [inadequate], and yet most of the programs adhere to those definitions. We want to offer alternative definitions ... which will not exclude us, our organizations and our communities."

Carol Khan-White, Director of the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, observed that, "For too long, the artistic achievements of people of color have been compared to and judged by Western European standards."

John Kuo Wei Tchen, Associate Director of the Asian-American Research Center at Queens College, maintained that, "... the cultures we come from do not see culture as a fragmented entity. We see martial arts, health, philosophy, the visual arts, dance and history as all interconnected and all part of the inter-dynamic whole." He recommended, therefore, that "...broader, more sophisticated, more effective criteria [for evaluating and valuing cultural arts activity in Asian communities] be developed that go beyond ... Western European aesthetic standards..."

Peter Jemison, reflecting on the inappropriateness of NYSCA policies and guidelines as they relate to Native American artists, observed that "...the best of the Native American crafts people are often what you would term senior citizens [but] what we call elders, people in their 70's who have learned their crafts from their grandmothers ... and passed it down to their daughters. The reservation is often the place [where] our artists and crafts people feel most comfortable ..." They are not, he noted, "likely to go to visit NYSCA. Yet, their work is in need of and deserves support from state agencies."

Byron Perry of the African Poetry Theatre confided that "there is a cultural chauvinism that exists at NYSCA that puts low priority on Black arts, which in turn affects the general attitude of NYSCA staff in their respect [for] and understanding of Black cultural programs."

The existence of such ethnic, racial and cultural bias, participants maintained, leads to:

1. The under-representation of people of color in program, administration and policy making roles within the state's cultural arts agencies;

2. Inequities in the allocation of public resources (budgets, status and personnel);

3. The undermining of culturally distinct institutions and programs through the withholding of such resources.

There was also the sense that the biased racial and cultural perspective of public and private agencies involved in documenting, promoting and interpreting the cultural heritage of New York State resulted in stereotypes, omissions, and distortions of the state's multicultural populace. This resulted, in large measure, from a failure to recognize the state's pluralistic character and an inability to understand and appreciate people of non-European racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

The implications of such findings and observations pose the central policy issue raised by the hearings -- <u>the need to establish a state-wide cultural policy which reflects the complex ethnic, racial, religious and cultural heritage of New York's population and its cultural arts organizations</u>.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN NEW YORK STATE

New York is one of the largest and most culturally diverse states in the nation. Second only to California in population, its more than eighteen million citizens are descended from virtually 90% of the world's people. For over one hundred years, New York City, the state's international cultural capital, has been the major American port of entry for immigrants. Even today, one third of New York's citizens have at least one parent born in another country. An estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 additional undocumented immigrants were born elsewhere.

According to the 1980 census, almost one-quarter of the state's population is Black or Latino (13.7% and 9.5% respectively). The Latino community includes Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Panamanians, Ecuadorians and Colombians. The Black community includes a large Caribbean element comprised of English speaking Blacks from the West Indies and French/Creole speaking Haitians, as well as some Spanish speaking Afro-Latinos. The Asian community is also diverse including Japanese, Filipino, Thai, Laotian, Korean and Cambodian people, and several distinct groupings of Chinese. Two million of the six million Jews residing in the United States live in the New York Metropolitan area. There are also other European ethnic communities of significant size in New York City including Italians, Irish, Russians and Greeks. Upstate cities -- Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Utica, etc.

-- are heavily Catholic because of the large number of German, Irish, Italian and Polish immigrants who settled there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Members of seven Iroquois tribes live within the state.

Certainly one of the factors calling for a review of the state's cultural policies has been the dramatic shift in New York City's population over the last two decades. The Census Bureau reported the city's population on April 1, 1980 as 7,071,639, a decrease of about 10 percent from 1970. This overall decline occurred because of what may have been the largest exodus in New York's history. An estimated 1.16 million more people moved out of the city than moved in during the 1970's. The vast majority of the immigrants were likely whites of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, for the percentages of people of color climbed sharply during this decade. By 1980, Blacks, Latinos and Asians made up 47.1 percent of the population, with Blacks increasing by 7 percent, Latinos by 10 percent and Asians by 10.2 percent. In 1980, Blacks were about 25 percent of the city's population and Latinos just under 20 percent. About 61 percent of the city's 1.41 million Latinos were Puerto Rican while the Asian increases were spurred by a jump in the Chinese and Korean populations. (**NEW YORK TIMES, September 20, 1982.**)

By 1985, New York City's people of color had become the majority of its population. Blacks, Latinos and Asians comprised an estimated 54 percent of the city's residents. (**NEW YORK TIMES, October 24, 1986.**) While the total White population fell by 276,000 between 1980 and 1985, the city's Latino communities grew by more than 416,000, its non-Latino Black communities increased by more than 20,000.

This demographic transformation of New York's populace is likely one of the factors that led the city's leading cultural organizations to begin re-thinking their missions and reassessing their audiences. It was also a likely factor in NYSCA's decision to launch its "New Audiences" initiative. The Cultural Arts Task Force maintains that such efforts will fall short of addressing the needs of the state's diverse publics and cultural institutions in an equitable fashion if they are carried out in a policy vacuum. Specifically, the state's cultural policies -- formal and informal -- must be articulated to at least reflect this new population reality in the state's cultural capital.

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN NEW YORK STATE

The cultural apparatus of New York State is a vast web of diverse yet complimentary cultural institutions. New York City is the cultural capital of the nation. The arts industry, a major industry, has a $5.6 billion annual impact on the area's economy

In addition to commercial theater, dance, music, visual arts and video film production companies, there are more than 1,500 non-profit cultural institutions in the metropolitan area. They include some of the world's most renown museums, orchestras, ballet and opera companies. More than half of these non-profit cultural entities are small with annual budgets of $50,000 or less. Together, the 1,500 institutions serve an annual audience of 54 million people, primarily through programs in the arts.

Though a significant percentage of New York's cultural institutions are concentrated in New York City, the statewide network is also vast and complex. Included among the formally organized institutions that address the cultural needs of one or more sectors of the populace are:

285 Colleges and Universities
620 Museums and Historical Institutions
715 Public Libraries
72 Arts Councils
3,962 Public Schools

There are also more than 5,000 labor union locals, many of which offer cultural programs, more than 2,000 independent film and video makers, 857 newspapers, radio and television stations, thousands of professional organizations, social clubs, church and community groups. Many of these offer state-of-the-art services to their constituents. Others are comparatively unsophisticated. The ethnic and cultural diversity of these institutions collectively mirror the pluralistic nature of the state's populace. Regrettably, the distribution of public resources to support,

nurture and sustain the various components of this network is skewed in favor of the oldest, most Eurocentric, most privileged and best endowed.

The younger, smaller, more culturally diverse members of this vast statewide network operate from a material, as well as, cultural disadvantageous position. More often than not, these inequities in resource allocation reflect a bias in favor of the Eurocentric cultural ideals and aesthetic standards that have become the normative criteria by which public officials, private philanthropists and significant sectors value cultural and artistic productions.

While individual acts of prejudice, racial or ethnic bias remain a factor in the allocation of public resources in support of the state's cultural institutions; and while each person or group is entitled to his or her own preferences in matters of cultural taste or aesthetic judgement, individual or group biases or preferences should not be used to withhold public resources or repress alternative tastes or preferences. In the absence of a formally articulated and enforced pluralistic statewide policy, such cultural biases do inform, if not determine, the current pattern of allocation of public resources in our state.

The Cultural Arts Task Force, then, calls for the formal establishment of a statewide cultural policy that will minimize such influences and ensure equitable access to the state's resources. Such a policy should be adopted and implemented by at

least the following state-funded agencies involved in promoting, supporting or funding cultural arts activities:

1. New York State Council on the Arts
2. New York State Humanities Council
3. New York State Education Department
4. The State University of New York

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS OF PEOPLE OF COLOR

Diverse social and ethnic groups live, work and produce culture in New York State. Each is drawn together through language, family, business, social and cultural networks. Among peoples of color, each group struggles to maintain and develop its traditional and contemporary arts. Arts and cultural organizations in these communities and groups are as much concerned with preserving the group's ethnicity and interpreting its cultural heritage as it is with exploring aesthetic issues and universal concerns. Artists and cultural workers who derive from these groups form organizations dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and celebration of their respective cultural heritages. They express themselves in traditional media (i.e. dance, music, literature, theatre, the visual arts, film, painting, sculpture, etc.) but, they bring to each of these genres their unique cultural content. All, in one way or another, seek to affirm and defend that which is of value in their culture in the

face of an overpowering, deterministic, national cultural ethos that too often imposes itself on their people and institutions.

Indigenous cultural arts organizations of people of color seek to give voice to the depth and diversity of New York State's multiethnic populations. As community-based cultural organizations, whether formally or informally organized, they are the creative sources from which alternative, non-Eurocentric expressions emerge.

In addition to theatres, dance companies, museums, film, video production companies and other formally organized cultural arts organizations; traditional institutions such as churches, social clubs, alterative schools and large scale events like the West Indian American Day Festival and Puerto Rican Day parades play critical roles in the survival, nurturing and presentation of the cultures of people of color. The maintenance, preservation and development of such institutions is vital to the overall cultural life of the state as a whole.

THE PRESSING CRISIS AND IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF OUR ARTISTS

The increasingly deteriorating economic situation that affected both the public and private sectors made the 80's a time of life and death struggle for the new institutions. However, even before the stock market crisis of Fall 1987, total support from

private and public sources had been becoming increasingly difficult to secure for cultural institutions of people of color. During and immediately following the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's and 70's there was a surge of funding support that witnessed the creation of many new institutions. While this initial assistance gave birth to many new organizations, it was not consistent enough to allow most of these organizations to mature into operating entities.

The **Black Theatre: A Resource Directory** (1973) was published by the now defunct service organization Black Theatre Alliance. It listed thirty-six cultural organizations run by African Americans that actively offered theatrical presentations to the citizens of New York State. These organizations existed in Long, Island, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Poughkeepsie, Albany, Ossining and the Bronx. Today, only nine of these groups are still making consistent effort in the field of live theatre, representing an attrition rate of 85%. The survivors are struggling mightily to provide a significant amount of artistic programs, maintain the few dedicated staff members they still have, and keep a roof over their heads.

While a few new theatres have come on the scene since 1973, the fate of the African American theatre pioneers listed in the directory accurately characterizes what is seen by many in African American theatre today as an uphill struggle. The Black Theatre

Movement that began in the late 60's with great bursts of creativity, work and hope, now survives in a crucial struggle with the following:

1. New staff, both artistic and managerial, are not available due primarily to an inability to compete financially for even a small number of the best young people. The theatres do not have the resources to promise them a future;

2. Major theatrical efforts concerning people of color are produced by organizations run by those other than people of color. This exclusivity is ethically, morally and aesthetically wrong. African American artists and all artists of color are more than capable of creating and realizing major theatre pieces, but lack material resources to do so;

3. Limited access to the private sector, still run by people other than those of color. It is almost impossible for these people to see our work as being essential to the well-being of themselves and their families. Since all indications are that this reality will remain in place through the rest of this century, it is ludicrous to think that these Black theatre organizations can expect to obtain the level of subsidy they need to thrive;

4. Only one of these theaters actually owns its own building, and this leaves most of the organizations subject to the uncertainties of the city's ever spiraling real estate costs. Last year, the Negro Ensemble Company (NEC) spent almost one-fifth of its operating budget of one million dollars on real estate costs and still the organization owns no property.

The example shown here, specifically in African American theatre, is applicable in all the other disciplines. Each of the disciplines has seen the progressive demise of fledgling institutions of people of color.

In the current state of continual crisis and struggle, it is necessary that the state government commit itself to establishing a stabilization fund. One goal would be to financially position these cultural institutions in such a way that they would have the capacity to be the primary creators, interpreters and deliverers of their own cultural experiences by the year 2000. Then and only then will people of color be equal partners with their fellow citizens and artists of European descent.

Great issue is taken with the NYSCA "New Audience" program, which essentially funds establishment cultural institutions, such as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, The Metropolitan Museum, and The Brooklyn Academy of Music, to extend their audiences into the so-called "minority" communities. This program is an immediate threat to the audiences and potential audiences of the many cultural institutions of people at the expense of their own cultural institutions. An immediate need is the elimination of this very harmful program, with a commitment by NYSCA to deter plans to launch any major program of this nature without direct input from our elected officials and Cultural Arts Task Force.

The Cultural Arts Task Force crystallized a series of findings from their meetings.

1. Despite the harrowing difficulties of existence, a pool of artistic talent with a breath and depth unparalleled in our history has managed to develop. Funding must assure their continued services to our organizations and cultural movements.

2. A smaller body of experienced and capable support personnel (managerial, technical, entrepreneurial) has also developed. Funding is crucial to the support and maintenance of these positions in our organizations.

3. A collection of artistic efforts within this time has been spurred and kept alive in the communities of people of color that has kept these communities alive with inspiration. This effort has also affected artistic wells outside of this community.

4. The art and cultural institutions of people of color during these crucial times have managed to develop growing, eager and sophisticated audiences from the community.

5. The largest underwriters of these efforts, besides the artists themselves, are the various local, state and national government agencies.

6. These institutions and artists have tried but have not been able to achieve a consistent and/or significant access to other types of financial support, namely corporate and individual philanthropy.

7. Experience exists within these institutions to begin the development of a methodology and management expertise to encourage support from local communities.

8. The majority of institutions of people of color exist on the brink of financial disaster. They live in fear of having to close their doors at any moment.

9. If the present crisis continues much of the collective experience of this group will be lost to the present generation and those to follow.

10. A major drain of resources and a major factor in instability in this area is the lack of ownership of the property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From these findings, the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

1. A special stabilization fund be established by the State of New York which monies can be granted to organizations of people of color for the following purposes:

    a. To improve compensation for artists;

    b. To improve compensation for present support staff;

    c. To recruit more and better support staff;

    d. To create specialized staff for fund raising within our communities;

    e. To eliminate deficits currently carried;

    f. To stabilize existing organizations in our communities.

2. A feasibility study be conducted by the State of New York to determine the extent of art real estate problems and to suggest ways of resolving these problems.

3. Stabilize and create service organizations to provide our artistic communities with such things as shared information, management, and technical and marketing skills.

MAKING FAIR CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

In a publication of more than 130 pages, The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) explains the regulations and procedures by which it selects who it should fund and determines how much they are to receive. To become eligible to receive funds from NYSCA, groups are expected to follow and pass through:

1. NYSCA guidelines (which determine eligibility);
2. The application procedures;
3. The review process (panel and auditors).

These three areas pose formidable obstacles to cultural institutions of people of color.

Each step in the application process can be a roadblock. Shifting and changing requirements quite often becomes evasively insensitive to the reality of institutions of people of color. The review process, which consists of a selected panel, always contains a majority of people unfamiliar or unsympathetic with the cultures of people of color. This factor makes unfair both the auditing process in which an "expert" in the field, but not of our cultures, evaluates the quality of our art, and the panel process in which a group of "experts" give their appraisal of the quality of an institution's or artist's objectives. These review procedures are flawed in that they emerge from a rigid Eurocentric

perspective and, as such, are biased in evaluating non-Eurocentric art.

The application criteria must also be altered or changed to eliminate inherent biases that adversely effect organizations of people of color. These biases mark an historical trend of limited amounts of support. The application process is weighed in favor of larger organizations with a staff skilled in administrative procedures. Many organizations of people of color have severely limited staff and, therefore, must rely on the artistic thrust of the organization to cover administrative duties.

Guidelines over the years have become very technical and difficult to interpret. This has been a progressive process with rules and regulations changing without seeming relevance to any of the institutions or artists of people of color. The changes and shifts of these guidelines are made without any input from members of the communities of people of color.

Guidelines are often hard to decipher, even for people who are familiar with the structure and idiosyncrasies of NYSCA. Each of the separate program areas (Special Arts Services (SAS), Music, Dance, Theatre, etc.) often require phone consultations or meetings with NYSCA staff, all taxing the already small staffs of the organizations. The reading and interpretation of the guidelines require a person with a graduate or undergraduate degree, in order

to examine all of the details and to organize a plan of action. This educational bias negatively affects community based or grass roots organizations.

The application form itself has been expanded over the years to an eight-page questionnaire that can easily become a report of several hundred pages by the time all of the projects and supporting materials are incorporated. In order to compile this document, several days or weeks are necessary, depending on the organization's familiarity with the procedures and the number of staff persons assigned to the task. College educated, specialized staff is necessary to complete this task as well as support staff (i.e., secretaries, accountants, photographers, script writers, contract coordinators, etc.).

The application form takes for granted that applicant organizations have planned programs several months, and often, as much as a year and a half in advance. This is weighed in favor of larger organizations since this practice is more characteristic of their standard method of operation than those of smaller groups.

Only organizations that have applied to NYSCA in the past receive copies of the guidelines. It was noted that it is often difficult to be put on NYSCA's mailing list. Expenses must be taken into consideration also, since many copies of the eight page form are required.

All organizations have to fill out the eight page questionnaire regardless of size, resources, or size of the request. This procedure again is biased in favor of larger organizations which have completed the process in the past and have the staff to assign NYSCA application.

The cultural arts organizations of people of color typically make smaller grant requests and have fewer staff to complete the forms, however, they must go through the same tedious application procedures as the major organizations. A revised application process is sorely needed.

The criteria for funding favors established organizations with a fiscal and managerial staff, and with programs preferential to Western and European aesthetic ideals. The first and foremost criteria for funding is based on a Eurocentric concept of "High Art". A startlingly high percentage of NYSCA funds are allocated to major art museums, classical ballet, opera and theatre companies, as well as symphonic orchestras. When other cultural art forms are presented (i.e. African, pre-Colombian, Native American), a decidedly biased preference toward European forms is displayed because of NYSCA's ignorance of the cultures that produce the art.

The criteria of managerial and fiscal stability is a **Catch 22** phenomenon for institutions of people of color. Without ample and consistent funding there cannot be managerial and fiscal stability.

The criteria places extreme importance not on an organization's ability to present a program, but on its ability to fill out fiscal reports, show a variety of courses of income, have several staff members on payroll, and influential Board members.

In-kind services, a survival method of institutions of people of color, are not evaluated highly, nor is volunteer work, another characteristic survival method of institutions of people of color.

The criteria of "scarcity of services" seemingly should assist organizations of people of color, but this is not the case. This, instead, pits these organizations against each other for minor grants while, for example, two major Paul Klee shows might happen to be funded in New York City within the same year.

PROGRAM

Each NYSCA Program, in addition, has lists of specific criteria for each project category often based on the preferences of the panel and the staff. These represent obstacles for new organizations because they tend to perpetuate certain tastes and favor certain organizations in specific disciplines. Organizations of people of color tend to present multidisciplinary events, which reflect the cultural life of which they partake. They are, therefore, at a disadvantage when applying to specific "discipline

programs" (dance, music, theatre, fine arts, etc.) which dissect the proposals into many aspects. They compete with highly specialized organizations which further the aesthetic ideas of European definitions of the arts. In many cases, the criteria is so biased that organizations of color are asked to withdraw.

There are several new NYSCA programs that demonstrate the pattern of preference in the funding of large and Eurocentric cultural organizations. These new programs seemed to have been specifically made with the idea of providing more funding for these large and somewhat stable institutions while completely overlooking the existence of institutions of people of color.

For example, the new multiyear support program benefits, by definition, stable or major organizations, locking in for two or three years at a time a certain amount of support while concurrently reducing the "pot" in each department discipline at NYSCA. For example, the Metropolitan Museum or the Metropolitan Opera will, year after year, receive around $1,000,000. It is a fallacy to say that you have to compete each year for support when you participate in this multiyear support program.

The "New Audiences" program was custom made for established organizations to attract people of color and other special constituencies. By definition, the majority of these funds would go to organizations that had not been successful in attracting

those special constituencies. Organizations could participate by invitation only. From the list of invitees, it is evident who this program is supposed to favor, namely, established white organizations. At about the same time, a "Harlem Initiative" was launched. This pilot project, nonetheless, had a much smaller budget with a $15,000 limit per proposal. This is in sharp contrast to the $50,000 plus grant awarded under the "New Audiences" program.

The Capital Support Program is one that limits its grants to $425,000 to complete capital projects not using other state funds. For most organizations of color not housed in city buildings, the most generous source of support for capital projects is the New York State Legislature Member's items.
By limiting this support from NYSCA, the organizations more likely to receive these grants will be those in which private corporate patrons undertake capital projects.

EVALUATION

The consensus among artists and institutions of people of color who took part in the hearings is that the auditors quite often lack the expertise to evaluate the works of people of color, because they are not familiar with the nuances of these cultures. The so-called "peer" review system of NYSCA, in which panel members are charged with the responsibility of deciding who receives funds,

is a highly flawed system. People of color are always out numbered on panels and have little or no input in that decision-making process.

In cutting funds or refusing funding altogether, the panel gives reasons for its decisions, which are often manipulative. An article in **THE VILLAGE VOICE,** April 26, 1983, entitled **"Black Funding Fightback"**, points out that William Hammond, Executive Director of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, was annoyed at NYSCA's refusal of a $20,000 grant to commission new works. The panel gave as its reason that it did not like the four choreographers chosen to do the new works. Hammond took issue with the panel, saying: "There is a feeling, particularly with the panel made up as it is now, that popularity is not such a plus." Hammond criticism of the disproportionate representation of avant-garde taste on the panel, which decided the 1982-83 funding, is echoed throughout the African-American dance community.

Eleo Pomare calls the dance panel an "aesthetic stacked deck with too many post-moderns, too many white folks who have their own idea of what a Black choreographer should and should not do, and not enough Blacks either on the panel or in a position to furnish it with evaluative auditor's reports." Pomare goes on to say, "Those Blacks who are on the panel are far removed from the realities of many of the choreographers they are asked to make decisions about." In fact, several years ago, Pomare refused his

$5,000 NYSCA grant. "They gave too little and asked too much." Pomare added that he has experienced the same kind of manipulative funding mentioned in Ailey's case. "With me they ask, directly or indirectly, are you still difficult? Do you still do anything with political themes? That's the way they get their point across."

Another specific instance of NYSCA abuse of criteria is seen in the peer panel review system. Asian American choreographer, Eleanor Yung declined from serving on the NYSCA Dance Panel after serving one year.

In a letter to Chair, Kitty Carlisle Hart, dated May 8, 1984, Ms. Yung states some of her reasons for refusing to serve on the panel:

> "... within this hierarchy, the level of funding is no longer dependent upon quality. Even with excellent modern works, one would never hope to receive the support or recognition a ballet receives ... Contrary to the public mandate, funding allocations and panel functioning are not encouraging the plurality of dance ... There needs to be greater awareness of the need to ensure greater balance in the distribution of funds based on a broad criteria which supports quality and diversity and not just token support. Also, the process of selecting panelists needs to be re-examined..."

The imbalance, the preferential treatment has not changed. Urgently needed changes will not be made until strong direct action is taken to assure them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short of scrapping the entire guidelines process and working out new, well thought out guidelines that would be fair to both large and small, Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric cultural groups, the following recommendations would be reasonable improvements that would be well within the capacity of NYSCA to execute:

1. Offer assistance to decipher the guidelines and fill out the application for new, small, and needy organizations;

2. Offer 3 or 4 different application forms to different organizations based on resources, budget and size of the request;

3. Provide assistance in the form of grants or technical people to gather and present good supporting materials. Example: Hire a good photographer who can work with five organizations to prepare slides for presentation to the panels;

4. Facilitates the process of applications for organizations that present multidisciplinary events;

5. Allow flexibility for organizations that do not schedule a year's events in advance;

6. Make a concerted effort to attract new applicants and to fund them;

7. Minimize the expenditures associated with the application procedure;

8. Incorporate a good number of experts on fields that are not within the Western European aesthetic traditions;

9. Evaluate support each year to look for trends that would harm the development or stability of organizations of people of color;

10. Compile statistics which clearly signal problems in the funding patterns affecting organizations of people of color;

11. Allow for alternatives in reporting on completion of programs to emphasize the success of the event in programmatic rather than fiscal terms;

12. Give more weight to the "scarcity of services" criteria and to the in-kind services and volunteer support;

13. Question every withdrawal or guideline zero for institutions of people of color;

14. Offer multiyear support to groups and organizations in need of stabilization;

15. Avoid the allocation of same level of support based on historical relationships between NYSCA and specific organizations;

16. Offer seed money for capital support projects that benefit those groups with limited access to private support;

17. Make increases to organizations of color incremental so that stabilization is achieved;

18. New programs should make special efforts to start a healthy funding history with organizations of people of color before the funds get locked into the traditional funding patterns;

19. Increase the involvement of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans in all stages of the process -- discussion of guidelines and initiative, Council and panel representation, staff recruitment, auditors and other contractual staff;

20. Name a high level committee that can monitor the development of more equitable opportunities for organizations of people of color in relationship to NYSCA.

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

The Interpretation of Art and Culture

One needs only to review the State Legislation that originally established the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), Executive Law Art, 19-1, sec., 527-529, to see the intended objective of this funding agency. In setting its parameters, the agency was specifically charged to nurture "... theatrical performances, musical concerts, operas, dance and ballet recitals, art exhibits, example of fine architecture and performing arts generally".

With this deliberate designation, NYSCA founders not only had a Eurocentric definition of art/culture in mind, but also an elitist one. The main thrust of the Cultural Arts Task Force is precisely in the area of the definition and interpretation of the meaning of art and culture. There is conflict in defining art because the funding institution that supports the art/culture in this state has a very narrow definition of art/culture. It is operating with the tax monies of all of its citizens while ignoring those groups whose view on culture differ.

Even NYSCA would have to admit, when faced with overwhelming evidence of past and present funding patterns, that they have lived up to their original narrow and very exclusive mandate. Their cultural policy has been elitist.

A basic contention is that there is no "Art Policy" in this state and that things happen haphazardly as the current administrative managers decided they should.

In the communities of people of color, the definition and philosophy of art/culture differs from that of Europe. There is a wholistic approach to art and culture. One finds institutions that quite often do not fall strictly within the realm of one art discipline. One also finds that in the celebration of festivals and cultural events, more than on art is represented (i.e. dance, music, poetry, visual arts).

This basic difference renders the rigid departmentalization of NYSCA disciplines into totally separate entities, a systematic block for many cultural institutions of people of color who must apply and be evaluated on their total program through many applications to different art programs.

The elitist mentality in the arts at NYSCA afford massive funding for such Eurocentric institutions as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to name a few. This also, ironically, results in the tax-paying people of color being forced to support institutions that do not celebrate their cultural heritage. It relegates their cultural heritage to a lower level of artistic importance. Realistically speaking, elitist institutions are heavily funded because that has become the norm. The subtlety of funding exists

in the fact that any institution that is stabilized and constantly funded will produce quality art. The small amounts of money allocated to institutions of people of color would hardly result in high quality. Small amounts of money given on an irregular basis do not allow any organization to grow and produce quality.

Institutions of people of color ideally should be developing toward the same type of security and stability enjoyed by "establishment" institutions. However, the "primary" institution framework is not working for smaller self-reliant institutions and must be built to preserve historical knowledge, share the present achievements and promote the continuing development of creative thought among each of the many cultures in this state.

Cultural institutions of people of color are necessary in our multicultural state. There would be an enormous vacuum in our cultural fabric if these institutions did not exist. Without the Studio Museum of Harlem, Caribbean Barrio, Alvin Ailey Dance Company, Negro Ensemble Company and Native American institutions, a host of programs would never have been mounted for the benefit of people of color and the entire multicultural population of the State of New York.

Without institutions of people of color, the following programs would not have taken place: the Marcus Garvey Exhibition; Puerto Rican Painters Retrospect 1900-1960; A Season Revival of

Katherine Dunham Dance Masterpieces; a photographic exhibition of the History of Chinatown, and a host of innovative arts programs produced at the Pan-Asian Repertory Company, Cine-vision and the Asian American Arts Center.

Strong support and sufficient funding must be given to strengthen cultural institutions of people of color so that these institutions can display programs illustrating our history to the total public. In twelve years, we will enter the year 2000, the 21st century. A continuously increasing number of multicultural collaborations must occur to form the basis for a changing society.

The need for programs from multicultural institutions is especially important in these times due to the cultural deficiency of our state's regular educational system. The limited curriculum taught in our state's schools focus primarily on Western European culture. The children of people of color attend a school system that does not reinforce their own value systems of beliefs. They are not instructed in a multicultural manner that would make them, their culture, heritage, and their history a part of the total flow of history and its value in the future of the world community.

Quite apart from who controls media and what images and roles are put before the American public, people of color have a basic right to control the making of their own images through control of

cultural institutions that are equitably funded. Presently, this does not occur. A case in point, in the late 1970's, Joseph Papp announced plans to form a professional African American Shakespearean Acting Company to be housed in one of his theatres. As a producer, Papp was capable of obtaining the funds for this project, while the same feat was and is not possible for an African American institution.

One estimate noted that Papp had raised a pledge amount greater than all African American Theatre groups had available collectively in the previous five years. Members of the African American community rightly felt that a project such as this should emanate from and be controlled by an African American institution.

The issue simply stated is enfranchisement, empowerment and equity. People of color have the right to artistically express their individuality and creativity, preserve their cultural identity collectively, and equally share in support from NYSCA and other funding sources which exist as a result of tax monies gathered from the total state citizenship.

There needs to be an equitable distribution of tax monies which have been allocated to support and foster the arts. The original elitist and Eurocentric mandate of NYSCA must be thoroughly revised and enlarged to include the artistic creations of all of the people of this state. Institutionalized racism,

Eurocentric bias and prejudice must be clearly identified and eliminated. People of color must participate in the decision-making process to assure that funding flows to them, so that their collective perspective can educate those ignorant of the multicultural fabric that, in reality, makes up America's culture and art.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has examined the issues, problems and background of the current cultural arts division of the State of New York, with the intent of drawing an accurate picture of what goes on and how things can be changed to include, within this picture, the culture and arts of people of color on a fair footing.

The major, immediate recommendations of the Cultural Arts Task Force as presented in this report are as follows:

Cultural Policy

1. The creation of legislation that will change the state's existing cultural policy to one that is multicultural and represents the many non-European peoples who live in this state, and are integral to this nation's founding and development.

2. Empowerment of the Cultural Arts Task Force to monitor multicultural policy to ascertain that equitable funding is implemented throughout the funding, cultural and educational system.

3. The creation of legislation that will assure stability and continuity of cultural institutions of people of color on varied levels.

Immediate Needs

1. A five million dollar stabilization fund be immediately established by NYSCA or aline the Governor's Budget to assure the continuity of cultural institutions of people of color.

2. The creation of a panel by the Cultural Arts Task Force to design criteria, administer and distribute the stabilization funds.

Criteria

Immediate revision of current criteria guidelines by NYSCA and the Task Force to reflect the needs and characteristics of multicultural institutions that involve a wholistic approach to their creative expressions.

Program

1. Legislation passed that will allocate to cultural institutions of people of color 50% of all funding that goes to culture, promotion of culture and educational experiences.

2. Legislation passed that will assure that individual funding agencies and their separate subdivisions (i.e. music, dance, theatre, museums, etc.) have 50% of their budget allocated to artists, programs and institutions of people of color.

This report is the work of many people, in addition to the members of the Cultural Arts Task Force. Their objective has been to recommend to the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislators suitable and well-reasoned political action. People of color in this state need the assurance that they also participate, on an equitable basis, in the funding allocated from their tax monies.

Politically speaking, this has become a question of empowerment, the ability to take part in all the decision-making processes, from the formation of the rules of funding qualification to the actual distribution of the funds themselves.

In terms of culture, a more basic issue is the survival of culture, heritage and identity. The African American, Asian

American, Latino American and Native American institutions of this state must be served as judiciously and equitably as those of the favored European derived institutions.

APPENDIX A

TASK FORCE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

NATIVE-AMERICAN STATEMENT

The history of art in North America is rich and varied. Art began on this continent when the indigenous people arrived at a period in their development when survival was not their sole concern. The native people of North America, referred to "en masse" as Indians, adapted to environmental challenges and quickly learned what was good to eat and when it was available. They understood where good drinking water existed and they knew that certain plants were powerful medicines. Within their environment was the beauty of the ever-changing and constantly renewing natural world.

Nature's beauty, mystery and drama created in the people a love for their world, and this love they shared with their families. Every element of nature taught its lesson to a people attuned to their environs, and from these lessons came the stories that filled people's minds around an evening fire. The animals and the birds were sisters and brothers to these people, and they spoke to each other in a language intelligible to each other.

Life was then as challenging as it is today, but it was less confusing. The people each had an understood role in their

community. There were leaders, hunters, farmers, mothers, warriors, crafts people and artists; each was a teacher. Men and women played a significant role in each child's education. Learning, the basis of their existence, started early for everyone, and yet the children were kindly treated and loved by parents and grandparents.

Art is sometimes viewed as that product of man which is only properly appreciated within the walls of a museum. My sense of the art of Native Americans is that we imbued our utilitarian and devotional objects with the beauty we felt in our lives and, consequently, they became our art. Region by region, the people used the natural material available to them to produce what they needed. If you were going to make a basket to transport the efforts of your gathering work, you could just as easily make that basket beautiful as well as functional. Pottery, likewise, was utilitarian. But for those pieces which were to hold especially precious things, the women took extra care and devised styles of great range and aesthetic beauty. Men were equally adept in the use of wood, antler bone, shell and stone, including very hard stone. Today, however, one must walk through a dusty museum, such as the Museum of the American Indian, to appreciate the diversity of what the Native American (Indian) has produced from materials found in his natural environment, works equivalent of great art and craft known any place in the world.

Europeans brought with them materials which Native Americans could make useful. Europeans desired the furs in which they saw Native Americans adorning themselves. Native Americans wore tanned hides, woven natural materials and the furs of animals for warmth. Their clothing was functional as well as exquisite, iron knives, copper and brass items and silver brooches were eagerly traded for and became a part of an expanding barter system. Beads, guns and many other less desirable elements became a part of that trading network, but suffice it to say that we adapted that which was useful and were sometimes seduced by that which was worthless.

Today the powerful art of Native Americans has expanded to include painting on canvas, printmaking, photography, and video documentaries. Tradition, however, continues. The weavers, potters, jewelers, sculptors, singers, dancers, beadworkers and quillworkers all continue. The Iroquois people are known to some as the six nations and we refer to ourselves as the Handenosannec. We have many traditional artists as well as contemporary artists who are actively working. The Handenosannec people are the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaau, Cayuga, Tuscarora and Seneca nation.

Each nation has its particular craft or art form for which it is well-known. The Mohawk have become the best basket makers among the six nations. The elder women of this nation are truly national

treasures producing baskets to rival any from North America. The Seneca nation has produced its share of contemporary artists, painters, sculptors, draughtsmen and now video artists. The Tuscarora nation has within its borders exceptional stone carvers who are men, and the best beadworkers within the six nations are Tuscaroran women of all ages. Among the Oneida are excellent wood carvers and a woman who sculpts in clay. They are well-known for their traditional crafts.

The art and crafts of the Handenosannec people, who live in seven reservation communities within New York State are alive and well. They deserve continuing support and encouragement. Museums and cultural centers exist at Hogansburg, New York. The Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center and the Native American Center for the Living Arts has had a rocky history, but it stands today 400 yards from American falls, with an infinite potential and a spectacular collection of Native American art.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the literary community among the Iroquois. These are poets and writers actively writing and publishing. At the present time, several publications are emanating from Iroquois country including **Turtle Quarterly** magazine, **North Indian Quarterly**, produced at Cornell University, and **Daybreak**, published in Virginia, but largely the product of Iroquois teaching faculty at the University of Buffalo. **AKWESASWE NOTES**, the oldest Indian newspaper, and **AKWEKON**, a literary and arts journal, are published by the Mohawk nation.

In closing, I'll mention the American Indian Community House Gallery, located at Houston Street and Broadway in New York City. For 12 years, the Gallery has mounted exhibitions of Native American art from all over the United States. The Gallery is the premier facility for this activity in the City.

Additional concerns for the arts of Native Americans must include support for the efforts of actors and actresses who live and work in New York. They deserve an avenue.

In overview, this is the art of Native Americans, misnamed by Columbus as Indians. This art is lively and vital to the communities from which it emanates.

Whenever art is discussed, we view it within its historical content and look to find its antecedent to explain the evolution of style. The art of North America is that of the 300 different Native American nations that exist. This history of that art is tied into the cultural destruction and genocide, which is part of the history of the United States of America. We must put aside that shame, and approach the people and their art with respect and dignity which they deserve, in recognition of their legacy and contribution to this country.

Art is a basis for communication. It speaks to all people and is produced by all people, regardless of race or color. New York State, which leads the nation in its support of art, must redefine its goals for the support of cultural diversity. The

ultimate beneficiaries of equal support and cultural diversity will be all of the people living in the state.

Peter Jemison
Site Manager
Ganondan State Historic Site

ASIAN AMERICAN STATEMENT

SCENE ONE: November 1987, a flyer is circulating door-to-door through the Gravesend and Bensonhurst sections of Brooklyn. Long, single-spaced, typed on both sides, it urges Italian Americans to boycott Korean American green grocers and Chinese American restaurants. The Koreans were said to be supported by "moonies" and the Chinese by "laundered drug money". "Right now," the flyer reads, "they are very quiet and not bothering anyone -- just smiling at us and, behind our backs, planning to take over our whole neighborhood".

SCENE TWO: January 1988, front page, **NEW YORK TIMES,** a photograph of eleven proud, young Asian students. The caption reads: "Science whizzes abound in a school and a city." The students are winners of the prestigious Westinghouse Science Competition.

The everyday reality of Asians in New York State is now defined by these two extreme perceptions. Either we are viewed as the new "mafia", controlling all drug trade, or "Horatio Algeresque" model minorities who work hard and smile. Sometimes we are both -- polite, but inscrutable and ready to take over the world.

Who perpetuates these images? Not just those Italian Americans in Bensonhurst ("Oh, they're just ignorant," many claim), but also the **NEW YORK TIMES**, whose editors regularly choose to represent Asians in these extreme stereotypes. This racism is systematic, deeply embedded into people's hearts and souls, and affects everyone.

What can be done by the cultural community of New York State? A great deal.

Even though Asians have been in New York as long as most immigrant groups (there was a visible downtown Chinatown in the 1850's), our numbers have been kept marginalized and small. The Chinese Exclusion Act, a national law in 1882, was eventually

applied to other Asian immigrants and kept us out of this country in significant numbers, until the 1965 Immigration Reform Laws eliminated racially-based quotas.

So, it has only been recently that Asians have been allowed to freely immigrate into the United States, and it's only recently that we've been able to establish arts and cultural organizations. Since the 1960's we have been experiencing a cultural renaissance. Our organizations are thriving with participation, ideas, and excellence. We are helping to give voice to communities long kept gagged, and building our cultures of resistance and dignity.

How can anti-Asian racism best be fought? We, Asian New Yorkers, will take the lead. We are organizing in Bensonhurst and Gravesend, and we will be challenging the **NEW YORK TIMES.** But we're starving for substantial support. We need decent and fair levels of funding and access to resources.

Provide the support for us to do it!

John Kuo Wei Tchen
Co-founder
Chinatown History Project

Associate Director
The Asian American Center
Queens College (CUNY)

LATINO AMERICAN STATEMENT

Demographic changes in New York State, this decade in particular, call for a reexamination and reassessment of the state's cultural policies. Puerto Ricans and other Latinos are one of the fastest growing segments of the state's largely non-white population, which includes Blacks, Asians and Native Americans. Nevertheless, we find the responsiveness of state agencies and institutions to our cultural values and frameworks to be, at best, hostile, and at worst, nonexistent. Currently representing about 13% of the state's total population, conservative estimates put the percentage of Latinos in New York State by the year 2000 at over 20% of the population. Clearly, the implications have not been adequately recognized by policy-makers.

Over the years, one of the most persistent issues raised by Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in New York has been for recognition of the need for greater cultural sensitivity and acceptance of diversity. This has manifested itself in recommendations for bilingual-bicultural education, cultural sensitivity training of agency staffs, and the translation of state documents into Spanish. These issues remain as continuing problems. A pattern has emerged in which these issues have to be raised by our community continually, as if they were new. They are not new and, in fact, predate the Latino presence as general issues of group incorporation into New York State. In order to develop a more coherent and effective cultural policy that is relevant to Latinos and other non-European racial/ethnic groups in the state, the relationship between culture and political power needs to be recognized more fully.

Latinos and other people of color are largely youthful populations, with an even larger representation in public school enrollments than in the population in general. In 1987, Latinos

were close to 15% of the state's school enrollments. This reality points to issues of the state's future in terms of its youth and the type of investment that is going to have to be made in their education as a key for Puerto Ricans and other Latinos -an issue in which the question of culture is critical.

Continued racial/ethnic segregation in the schools and in housing, the absence of a serious approach to non-Western cultures and traditions in the school curriculum, and the exclusion of Latinos and other racial/ethnic minorities from decision-making positions, all conspire to breed the ignorance and prejudice that are the basis of today's deteriorating racial/ethnic relations in New York State. In the schools, potentially a major resource for fostering greater intergroup understanding and cooperation, the failure of a relevant cultural policy has been most dramatic.

Some would argue that cultural matters are a private affair and should not be under the purview of government. They would point out that culture is transmitted in the family, religion and other community institutions, and different communities should find private means through which to develop better intergroup relations. This, however, is a view that can only be made from a privileged position in this society. It does not address the realities of poor and politically marginalized Puerto Rican and Dominican communities that are experiencing a crisis of the family. They are also often largely peripheral players in the operation of the Catholic Church, their main religion, and find their community institutions in a particularly fragile condition today. Under these circumstances, government must play a major role in helping to shore up these institutions and to facilitate intergroup understanding and cooperation.

With these considerations in mind, what should New York State do to develop a more relevant cultural policy in terms of Puerto

Rican and other Latino communities? The following list is offered as a starting point in responses:

1. The New York State Council on the Arts needs to develop a clear philosophical and programmatic statement on Latino cultural policy that addresses issues of great support for Latino cultural institutions and resources, as well as incentives to make mainstream Euro-centered cultural institutions more responsive to Latino cultural needs. Such a statement would establish a process of bringing Latinos in as equal partners, with all that it implies.

2. The New York State Education Department (along with the State University System) has a special role to play in evolving a cultural policy on Puerto Ricans and other Latinos at the state level. A systematic review of curriculum and materials, as well as staff training programs, need to be undertaken with an eye towards a full incorporation of Latino cultural, social and historical contributions and realities. Programs to promote intergroup relations need to be developed. The State Education Department must urgently increase the number of Latinos on its staff. (Currently only 1.5% of its staff is Latino).

3. New York State needs to develop a coherent language services policy that systematically assures that non-English speakers receive full state service. The provision of adequate translation services in all agencies, the proper translation of all written and audio materials must be more adequately addressed.

4. New York State needs to finally make affirmative action for Puerto Ricans and other Latinos a reality, throughout its system of government and in all branches, as a concrete way to encourage greater cultural sensitivity and contact in the state. Currently, Latinos make up only 3.4% of the state government work force, although we are close to 13% of the state's population. By the year 2,000, current trends indicate that Latinos will make up only 4.6% of state employees, but 20.1% of the population. In other words, job parity for Latinos, already scandalously low, can be expected to worsen dramatically in the future, unless something is done now.

In the end, it must be emphasized that the development of a cultural policy that speaks to the realities of groups that are now outside the cultural and political "mainstream" can only be effectively done with the direct participation of the affected groups. In this sense, a call for more relevant cultural policy for Latinos and other people of color is a call to find ways for people from these various communities to work together in accomplishing this goal in a spirit of mutual respect and accountability that is so lacking today.

Angelo Falcon
President
Institute for Puerto Rican Policy

AFRICAN AMERICAN STATEMENT

African Americans are not new to the arts here in New York State, nationally or internationally. From the very beginning, African Americans have played a major role in making American culture more than merely an imitation of European art.

It would take volumes to illustrate how the music, dance, style and language of this country has been shaped and affected by the presence of disenfranchised Africans, working their way from slavery to second-class citizenship. One of the first American best-sellers, **Uncle Tom's Cabin**, which went on to be the most travelled American play of its time, reflected a major American dilemma (namely slavery and the victimization of African Americans) that concluded in the horrific Civil War.

African American folk music contributed to the creation of American musical theatre. Skits based around African American characters (however stereotypical) were developed into minstrels, vaudeville, and some early films, as well as radio and television programs. George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess", Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill's "Three Penny Opera", and Darius Milhaud's "Le Creation Du Monde" are outgrowths of Black music fashioned in this country. Most notably, this country's first popular music, ragtime, and subsequent musical development was shaped and grew out of African American forms (i.e. blues, jazz, swing, bebop, rhythm and blues), newly created in this nation, but having origins in Africa.

African Americans have also led the nation and world community in innovative dance creations. The Katherine Dunham Dance Company, headquartered at the time of its golden age in New York City, was seen around the world by more people than any other dance company without government subsidies. The Alvin Ailey Company holds a similar record today with the help of government subsidies.

African American cultural arts institutions and artists need what all people of color in this country need and are still

struggling to attain: equality and power. Our cultural institutions and artists need the same support --- financial, philosophical and critical -- that has gone to Eurocentric artists and institutions, in order to continue our legacy of great American artists and cultural contributions.

William Moore
Arts Critic
BLACK AMERICAN WEEKLY

APPENDIX B

STATISTICAL SUPPLEMENT

Introduction

While public funding to the arts in the State of New York has reached unprecedented levels during the 1980's, a disturbing trend has been observed. Funding to organizations which have distinctly ethnic bases and specificities of purpose has not kept pace with funding to the Western Eurocentric arts expressions.

We, the Cultural Arts Task Force, are observing this trend and strongly urge both a re-thinking and a readily discernible re-direction in arts funding in New York State.

To this end, and as a means of assessing our situation, the following research survey and analysis was undertaken. This is the first phase of what will be reviewed more extensively in future reports.

Methodology

The five year funding histories (1982/83 through 1986/87) of 99 organizations that are funded by NYSCA was requested. A sample of this size (greater than 5% of all applicant organizations and fundees) should offer both a statistically valid sampling of all organizations which have bases of operation and specificities of purpose which are both *de facto* and *de jure* ethnic. By ethnic, it

was taken to mean that these organizations had overt and explicit orientations toward the needs and concerns of people of color within the State of New York.

From this sample, 57 organizations were found to exhibit the following characteristics:

1. Complete five year funding histories;
2. Continued existence to the present time;
3. Judged by both NYSCA and their fellow organizations to be stable in operation;
4. Drew the majority of their staff and boards from communities of people of color;
5. Have successfully applied to more than one council program;
6. Covered the full range of artistic activity within the state;
7. Applied for a full range of financial support (i.e., the total amounts of their requests varied from less than $5,000 to more than $100,000). A table of the organizations and their funding histories is attached.

The offices of NYSCA voluntarily compiled an additional listing of organizations which were, by their definition, organizations serving people of color. However, there is considerable debate as to the true ethnicity of a number of these organizations. Further, there was considerable variation over the five year time span in the content of this listing. For example, several organizations applied only once or twice and the levels of their requests varied dramatically over time. It is imperative, from a statistical perspective, that definitions be consistent and

that all data be uniform. It was perceived that to use this second list would defeat the purpose of showing NYSCA support for stable organizations over a five year span, and would ultimately throw all our findings into the area of speculation and conjecture.

SIGNIFICANT STATISTICAL FINDINGS

1. From 1982-83 through 1986-87 overall NYSCA funding grew from $32,499,000 to $44,300,000 -- a growth rate of 36%. Funding from the 12 traditional council programs of film, literature, media, dance, music, presenting organizations, theatre, local service organizations, special arts services, architecture, planning and design, museum aid and the visual artists program grew from $31,936,000 to $37,638,417 or by 17%.

2. Funding to the sample of 57 organizations went from $2,113,619 to $3,153,768 -- an increase which represents 8.8% of the $11,000,000 of additional support allocated to NYSCA during this same period.

3. For the sample of 57 organizations, the percentages of their total funding as compared to the total council budget are as follow:

1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
6.5%	7.3%	7.2%	6.98%	7.1%

These percentages indicated a five year growth rate of 9%. This rate of growth was analyzed using a "T" test statistical paradigm as a means of determining if it differed significantly. (i.e., was it in line with what could have been predicted in the study groups level of funding increase proportional to the overall Council's increased level of funding?)

As compared to the growth rate for the 12 traditional Council programs, it was found that a growth rate of 9% for a sub-group

(such as the 57 studied) had a statistical likelihood of occurrence of **no more than 3 chances in 100.** As compared to the total Council growth rate of 36%, a 9% growth rate is **even less likely than 3 in 100 chances.**

CONCLUSION

It is obvious, from a purely statistical viewpoint, that the funding for this group of 57 organizations is significantly less than funding to the rest of the NYSCA applicants. This is especially alarming in view of the fact that a number of the 57 were and are "primary" institutions, as defined by the State of New York.

In New York State, where people of color comprise about 17% of the population, such levels of support as have been evidenced, are not only inequitable and insufficient but also run counter to the pluralistic nature of our society. Moreover, the issue emerges that if NYSCA is inadequately addressing the needs of stable, long-lived institutions, what is its treatment of emerging artistic organizations.

The concerns of the people of color of New York State must be addressed at all levels of the funding process. New applications must be developed, fledgling organizations nurtured, and traditional ones sustained and permitted to grow.

ADDENDUM

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REFERENCE MATERIAL

1. Transcriptions of the November 12, 1987 Public Hearing Held by The New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus at the Schomburg Center.*

2. Booklet "Reflection on New York's Art Council: The Legislators, Peer Review and Practices, with some Recommendations" by Craig Gilborn, first installment.*

3. Newspaper Clipping - Amsterdam News Editorial "Apartheid Arts" July 9, 1983.

4. Newspaper Clipping - Village Voice - April 26, 1983 "Black Funding Fights Back" by Zita Allen.

5. Copy of letter to NYSCA Chairperson from Choreographer, Eleanor S. Yung, Director, Asian American Dance Theatre.

6. Publication "Black Theatre: A Resource Directory" Black Theatre Alliance, 1973.*

7. Testimony of Artist Howardena Pindell delivered June 27, 1987 at the Agendas for Survival Conference at Hunter, NYC, sponsored by the Association of Hispanic Art.*

8. Proposal "NYSCA Special Initiative on Institutional Development for Multicultural Organizations" by the Cultural Arts Task Force of The New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, March 1988.*

9. Statistical Chart of NYSCA Five Year Funding Pattern.*

* Not attached but available to the public upon request.

JLY 9, 1983/10

Editorials

Apartheid Arts

All Black people can dance and play basketball, right? Given the stereotypic notions held by many white Americans about us it is amazing that the New York State Council on the Arts's Dance Program has been funding fewer Black dance companies. Typical of their behavior is the recent refusal to fund Eleo Pomare's dance company.

The smaller Black dance companies are shut out of funding and the two prominent companies, the Dance Theatre of Harlem and Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theatre, are kept at the same level of funding year after year as though costs for producing new works are fixed.

It is time that all of us, particularly our elected officals, raise some questions about the Council, its structure, its purpose and its funding criteria. There is no reason that our tax money should be seen as a source of subsidy for the New York City Ballet or the Joffrey.

We suspect that the Council's decisions, more often than not, are the result of cultural bigotry and chauvinism and it is time that we put a stop to it. There are no superior cultures.

NEW YORK
Amsterdam News

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BLACK FUNDING FIGHTBACK

By Zita Allen

The figures tell the story: in 1982-83, when the New York State Council on the Arts's Dance Program funded 84 companies, 10 were black. In 1981-82, six of the 85 companies funded were black, a decrease from the previous fiscal year when eight black companies out of 99 were funded. With the exception of '82, the number of black companies funded by the NYSCA Dance Program has steadily decreased since '77.

But council representatives prefer to offer statistics under the broad, grab-bag label "minority." In 1981-82 the Dance Program received 34 minority applications and funded 11. In 1982-83, of some 31 minority applications received, 16 minority companies were funded. Not only does "minority" include Ukrainians, Chinese, Japanese, Balkans, and Hispanics, it also makes NYSCA look better. It also distorts the council's role vis-à-vis institutionalized racism. Remove the "minority" smoke screen and one thing is clear: black choreographers and their companies are in jeopardy. Aware of the danger, they have recently begun to fight for their lives.

A number of black choreographers and dancers have banded together with other "minority" artists under the umbrella organization, the Committee of Minority Dance Artists. So far the committee has presented NYSCA's executive director Mary Hayes and the Dance Program director and deputy director, Beverly D'Anne and Al Burr, with a list of grievances, as well as proposed panelists and auditors; it has also enlisted the aid of members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the New York State Legislature, and notified Governor Cuomo of the minority community's discontent.

The Committee's actions were triggered by rumors that the only division of the council responsive to the needs of minority artists, Special Arts Services, was going to be disbanded and applications to it funneled through the appropriate discipline. For the black dance community, with its history of strained relationships with the Dance Program, the idea spelled instant death. After all, some companies like Dianne McIntyre's Sounds in Motion had applied to the Dance Program for five years before being accepted. Others had given up after only a few rejections and complained of "blatantly insensitive" dismissals. Confronted with the possibility of the dismantling of SAS the Committee fired off a battery of letters praising SAS for its nurturing attitude and complaining about the Dance Program.

Eleo Pomare

The complaints are not new; they come after years of watching funding processes and patterns that seemed designed to deprive them of access to significant levels of support. Those aspects of the funding mechanism which upset them most are Dance Program auditors who are "not qualified to review or evaluate performances by minority companies"; dance panels which arrive at arbitrary qualitative standards that seem to fluctuate as the composition of the panels change; a budget which, for the last four fiscal years, allowed black companies no more than a paltry eight to 14 per cent of the Dance Program's pie; and, of course, racism, which the committee charges underlies the companies' "harsh and arbitrary treatment" at the hands of the Dance Program.

Pomare was so annoyed several years ago that he refused his $5000 NYSCA grant: "They gave too little and asked too much."

No black company is too large or too small to have felt hampered by the council's disproportionate disbursement of funds: these complaints come from the mammoth Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater which at $225,000 receives more NYSCA funds than any other black company, as well as from Pomare's smaller company with its more ordinary grant of $5000. (It's worth noting that no black company, other than Alvin Ailey's and Arthur Mitchell's, has received more than $10,000 from NYSCA's Dance Program since '77.)

According to Ailey executive director Bill Hammond, "our

Continued on next page

83 VOICE APRIL 26, 1983

ASIAN AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE
26 BOWERY·NEW YORK, N.Y.10013 (212) 233-2154

May 8, 1984

Kitty Carlisle Hart
Chairwoman
New York State Council on the Arts
80 Centre Street
New York NY 10013

Dear Kitty:

Thank you for your invitation to serve on the dance panel. Although your invitation is both an honor and a privilege, after careful and painful consideration, I must, regretably decline your request. However, because of the impact of the panel and the viability and quality of dance work chosen to be supported by the Council, I feel I must set forth my reasons for declining.

Over the past year, I have realized that it is not only time consuming to be an advisory panelist, but is demanding in terms of total involvement. As the artistic director of a small company, I cannot afford 3 or 5 evenings a week to view dance performances. In addition to the difficulty of the time committment required, the atmosphere which I have experienced at panel meetings under the direction of Beverly has not been one of generosity in spirit. Instead, it has been often times narrow, harsh and elitist, supportive of only particular types of dance and token support for other types.

The panel system based on a judgement of "quality" ideally would produce a check and balance situation and guarantee a certain degree of fairness in distributing public funds. However, looking at statistics put together by the dance staff, over 50% of funds have been given to major ballet companies (5), only 23.24% to major modern companies (8). The trend of the field is obviously toward support for ballet. Looking further at statistics, only 9.36% of the funds has been given to small modern companies (33 in Manhattan, 6 in upstate). As a small minority modern dance company, I am particularly sensitive to the great disadvantage of companies like mine in this hierarchy of funding. For within this hierarchy, the level of funding is no longer dependent upon quality. Even with excellent modern works, one would never hope to receive the support or recognition as ballet receives.

ASIAN AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE
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As a public institution, I believe the Council has an obligation towards all of its constituencies, not the elite few. Instead, under the guise of "support based on quality", has it not become self-serving? It has been difficult for me to participate truthfully in a process which is totally contrary to my understanding of dance and public support. Contrary to the public mandate, funding allocations and panel functioning this part year leaned towards discouraging and not encouraging the plurality of dance. Plurality in any form of art is crucial to the development of creativity. Furthermore, my participation under these conditions has a debilitating affect on my own artistic work. Therefore, I must decline this invitation to serve again.

Please be assured that my loyalty to the arts, and to the Council has not diminished. After one year of involvement in the panel system, I have come to realize the importance of certain processes. The analysis of statistics regarding funds distributed is important as a check on the funding criteria relied upon. There needs to be greater awareness of the need to ensure greater balance in the distribution of funds based on a broad criteria which supports quality and diversity and not just token support. Also, the process of selecting panelists needs to be re-examined. I respect the integrity and intention of the panelists whom I sat with the past year. However, I believe that in order to ensure the viability of the system, there should also be a check and balance of the selection of panelists to minimize the danger of having the majority of the panel favoring one style of dance, or be personal friends or supporters of particular staff members. Please consider my suggestions in the positive manner intended, and if I may be of any service in the future, I would be most happy to oblige.

Thank you, Kitty, for your attention. I am sure you yourself as a true supporter of the arts and an artist, can understand the necessity of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Eleanor S. Yung

Eleanor S. Yung
Director.

cc: Mary Hays
all current panel members in dance
all current Council members